

Personnel honoured for outstanding acts in Armed Forces Operational Honours and Awards List

Military personnel from across the three services have been recognised for outstanding bravery, commitment, and commendable service in the latest Armed Forces Operational Honours and Awards List, published today.

Recipients have all shown outstanding courage and dedication while on operations, with numerous recipients recognised for their exceptional contribution to the evacuation of Afghan and British nationals from Afghanistan during Operation Pitting.

Secretary of State for Defence Ben Wallace said:

I would like to congratulate the inspiring Servicemen and women who have been recognised in the Armed Forces Operational Honours and Awards List. The awards highlight the skill and bravery of Service personnel across a breadth of challenges at home and abroad.

Operation Pitting was the largest British evacuation since WWII thanks to our brave personnel, while those working on the Carrier Strike Group have made a vital contribution to our global security. Back home, our people helped save lives even when off duty – demonstrating unrivalled commitment to the service of their country.

Operation Pitting case studies

For his role as Commander Joint Force Operations, Brigadier Daniel Blanchford Royal Marines has been awarded the Commander of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire (CBE). With a global remit to deliver the UK's extreme high readiness crisis response headquarters, he led highly effective responses to the repatriation of UK nationals from overseas during the COVID-19 pandemic and the disaster relief response to the explosion in Beirut Port. When the Taliban's assault on Afghanistan took place, he generated, deployed, and commanded a force of more than 1,000 military, diplomats, civil servants, and UK Border Force personnel to deliver Operation Pitting.

Brigadier Daniel Blanchford said:

It is an honour to have been recognised in the Ops list, but this is really a story about the incredible and humbling work from all the soldiers, sailors, aircrew, RAF Police and movements team whose selfless and compassionate commitment around the clock in very

difficult conditions enabled us to evacuate 15,000 vulnerable Afghans.

Wing Commander Kevin Harry Thomas Latchman RAF has been awarded the Air Force Cross (AFC) after demonstrating exceptional leadership and gallantry in the face of imminent danger during Operation Pitting. Following a suicide bomb explosion at Kabul airport, his crew loaded distraught passengers into the cargo hold. As he commenced take-off, a convoy of three vehicles entered the runway approximately 1,000 feet in front. With no time to stop, he successfully navigated the aircraft to clear the vehicles, which fled below the wing by only 10 feet. His superior airmanship saved the lives of 377 people onboard the aircraft.

Wing Commander Kevin Latchman said:

Operation Pitting was an incredible experience for all who took part, and I was very proud of my Squadron for their courage and professionalism in such a dynamic environment. For me, this was the most significant occurrence in my career and I am honoured to receive recognition.

Private Ahmed Fahim of the 3rd Battalion The Parachute Regiment has received a Mention in Despatches (MID) for his unflinching courage and compassion working for much of the time as the sole military interpreter during Operation Pitting. Performing duties which far exceeded his rank, he worked tirelessly to calm distressed Afghans and reassure nervous Taliban fighters now in control of security in Kabul. In the aftermath of a suicide attack which killed over 175 people, he rushed into the desperate crowd to rescue a severely wounded baby, enabling her to receive medical care just in time to save her life.

Private Ahmed Fahim said:

I am so proud that I saved some lives the day the IED went off near the Abbey Gate, Kabul Airport. I remember pulling out the injured and the dead bodies and someone handed me a small baby from the crowd. I started running towards the doctor, looking at the baby while running and I did not stop running until I reached the medics. A few hours later I was told by the doctor that the baby survived and that was the greatest happy news for me that day.

Lieutenant Colonel Chloe O'Brien of the Royal Logistics Corps, who played a pivotal role in the preparation of the 1,000-strong Joint Task Force during Operation Pitting, has been awarded the Queen's Commendation for Valuable Service (QCVS). Working to continuously evolving requirements, her leadership of logistic support to humanitarian efforts in hot, unsanitary conditions was instrumental in the success of the operation and undoubtedly saved lives,

providing critical care for vulnerable Afghans.

Lieutenant Colonel Chloe O'Brien said:

It was a challenging deployment which was truly an immense team effort of which I am very proud to have been a part of.

Also receiving a QCVS is Corporal Jamie Lee Found of the 2nd Battalion The Parachute Regiment for his leadership in protecting the Evacuee Handling Centre and managing the crowds seeking to board evacuation flights from Kabul Airport last August. For hours he provided hands-on management of his personnel, directing his team to form a shield wall. He worked tirelessly in the face of extreme adversity, dealing with multiple casualties and fatalities caused by the crush of those trying to flee.

Corporal Jamie Lee Found said:

It was an operation we've not really seen before – not the norm we would train for. We've done public order training to prepare us for certain situations but for the humanitarian side of it, I don't think there's any way you can train for that.

Other case studies

Lieutenant Commander Andrew Dennis Royal Navy has been awarded the QCVS for outstanding performance in protecting the health of nearly 4,000 Service personnel serving on the Carrier Strike Group. Effectively liaising with more than 40 countries to coordinate COVID-19 policies, he personally developed and managed the successful vaccination programme across the Strike Group that resulted in every individual being fully vaccinated against COVID-19.

Lieutenant Commander Andrew Dennis said:

It was a complete surprise to receive an award, and a great feeling to be recognised for my work with the CSG. Getting nine ships to sea safely from a COVID-19 perspective was really challenging. Policies had to be agile and working across Government was essential to creating a safe environment enabling us to successfully deploy.

The full Armed Forces Operational Awards List can be found on gov.uk [here](#)

First of its kind support service for victims of conversion therapy funded by government

- The support service will help anyone who has been through, is at risk of, or is going through, conversion therapy
- It is the first government-funded service of its kind in the world
- Galop is the nation's leading anti-violence LGBT charity

Today (Friday May 13) the Minister for Equalities, Mike Freer, has announced that Galop has been selected to deliver a first of its kind, Government-funded support service for victims of conversion therapy.

Anyone who considers themselves as having gone through, or being at risk of, LGBT conversion therapy will be able to use the service, which will be accessed via phone or online.

Once users make contact via a helpline, they will be provided with initial pastoral support, information, and tailored advice.

This new funding comes as the Government continues to prioritise public safety and strengthening the rights of victims.

Galop already works with the Home Office to deliver its LGBT domestic abuse helpline. They will bring their experience in providing understanding, support and guidance to LGBT victims of abuse and violence to delivering this vitally important service for LGBT people.

Minister for Equalities, Mike Freer, said:

"Conversion therapy blights people's lives, and it will never achieve its intended outcomes.

"This practice has no place in modern society and we are taking action to ensure it is banned in the UK.

"We have chosen Galop to deliver this new service as they can draw on their significant expertise to deliver a successful service that provides victims of conversion therapy with effective and compassionate support."

Leni Morris, Galop CEO, said:

"For the past 40 years, Galop has been serving the needs of the LGBT+ community, and providing victims of abuse and violence with somewhere to

turn.

“We have been working with victims and survivors of so-called “conversion therapy” for many years, and we see the long-term, even life-long, effects this type of abuse can have. The people we work with often face significant barriers in finding information and seeking support when they are subjected to this kind of abuse, and we are glad to be able to use this funding to extend and expand the information and support available to all victims of conversion practices in the UK.

“The National Conversion Therapy Helpline is a vital lifeline for our community, and we are pleased it will continue to be here for all LGBT+ people who need it.”

The announcement is part of the Government’s mission to keep everyone across the UK safe, and it comes as the Queen’s Speech set out the intention to ban conversion therapy.

Galop was appointed after a competitive open tender process. Their existing Conversion Therapy Victim Support helpline will continue to operate, whilst Government funding is used to develop an instant messenger chat function and online centre of expertise about the damage caused by conversion therapy and how best to support those going through it.

Report by the Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities: UK response, May 2022

Thank you, Ambassador Hasani, for your presentation, and for the draft work plan and report on recent activities that you have shared.

We welcome the Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities (OCEEA)’s discussion and coordination of these efforts in the context of the OSCE’s comprehensive concept of security. Economic prosperity and healthy environments are conditions that can help bolster our security. Dialogue and co-operation on these issues are prerequisites for peace, stability and good neighbourly relations. We fully agree with your assessment that resorting to military means over diplomatic ones undermines the very premise on which the founders built this organisation.

Russia’s war of aggression against Ukraine is showing how the impact of armed conflict extends beyond immeasurable human suffering and grief to significant damage to both the economy and environment. The Ukrainian economy is set to shrink by almost half, and the environmental consequences of the conflict will be felt for generations to come.

We agree with your assessment that the effects of the conflict extend beyond Ukraine's borders. Neighbouring countries are bearing the environmental and economic consequences of Russia's actions. For example, the Moldovan people have sheltered nearly half a million Ukrainians. Together with other neighbouring countries of Ukraine (Poland, Hungary, Slovakia and Romania), the UK is grateful for Moldova's selfless act of kindness since Russia's invasion of Ukraine, together with those other neighbouring countries. We are working with the Government of Moldova and partners to increase our support for Moldova's efforts, including direct humanitarian assistance and assistance for Moldovan customs service and border guards.

We support your decision to focus your Office's activity on the conflict in Ukraine, and your suggestions for how you may be able to support the country once the circumstances on the ground allow it; in particular in two areas.

First, the development of sustainable, climate-conscious post-conflict reconstruction plans. We join you in commending the 2021 Swedish Chair of the OSCE and the participating States for the adoption of the landmark [Ministerial Council Decision on climate change](#), which provides a solid basis for further work by the OSCE and collaboration between participating States on climate security. As well as damaging the planet, conflicts also divert attention and resources away from addressing existential climate challenges, so we look forward to participating in this work, including at the high level conference on climate change, when this again becomes possible.

Second, the proposal to build capacity to counter corruption. The UK and its partners have actively supported Ukraine's efforts to build its resilience through crucial democratic and rule of law reforms, including the establishment of strong anti-corruption institutions. And we will continue to do so. We welcome your Office's plans to coordinate with other executive structures in order to design and implement joint activities in the areas of anti-corruption, anti-money laundering, and asset recovery.

More broadly, I would like to celebrate efforts to mainstream a gender perspective into your Office's projects and activities. Issues like women's economic empowerment and women's entrepreneurship are inextricably linked to economic development.

We welcome the full set of proposals and agree that the OSCE could assume a leadership role in international assistance in this field, convening international stakeholders and developing joint programmes. We look forward to hearing more about these plans in due course.

And finally, we welcome the work your Office is doing in response to the crisis in Afghanistan, particularly the further assessment of the consequences of the crisis for women. The Afghan people deserve to live in dignity, peace and security, reflecting the last two decades of their political, economic and social achievements. We welcome the OCEEA's partnerships with the Central Asian participating States and the field missions they support in meeting this challenge.

In closing, thank you to you and your Office. You have our full support.

[Dstl shows off its world-leading science to Head of the UK Armed Forces](#)

News story

Chief of the Defence Staff (CDS), Admiral Sir Tony Radakin, has made a special visit to the Defence Science and Technology Laboratory (Dstl).



Ghost robot dog

He saw first-hand the science and research under development for the future of Defence. Among the science on display was a robotic canine, dubbed Ghost Dog. Dstl is using the US-made technology to carry out research in the area of human-machine teaming. The aim is to develop systems that are relevant to operational requirements, and that can support troops by removing them away from potentially dangerous tasks, including surveillance and reconnaissance.

Dstl experts also shared research on armour and protection capabilities, by displaying the latest novel armour system currently in development for the Challenger 3. This system will save lives by providing improved performance, with more protection. The novel technology comes in a series of armour packs, aiming to optimise the design of side armour by reducing its weight. This saved weight can then be integrated into the rest of the vehicle, improving the overall performance with no additional penalty.

Admiral Sir Tony Radakin said:

It's been brilliant to be here at Dstl to see the science inside UK defence and security. Dstl's work gives Defence the edge in capability and decision-making, it creates prosperity, and crucially saves lives. I've been impressed by the breadth of activity, the depth of the technology, and the multi-disciplinary approach that ensures the Armed Forces, and importantly, the nation

have a winning edge over those who want to do us harm.

Chief of the Defence Staff (CDS), Admiral Sir Tony Radakin, operating the Ghost Robot Dog alongside Dstl scientists

As well as the research, design, testing and support to the integration of new armour systems, Dstl scientists have also developed novel methods to capture and analyse information from the battlefield. This information is fed directly back into future armour system development, ensuring systems remain optimised to the changing operational environment. The Scene Capture And Reconstruction (SCAR) tool, developed by the Dstl's Combat Incident Exploitation Team, has recently been deployed with Dstl Scientific Advisers to benefit UK troops on the front line.

Dstl's Chief Executive, Paul Hollinshead, said:

It has been a great honour to have the Chief of the Defence Staff here so he can see, up close and behind the scenes, what Dstl does for the Armed Forces and Homeland Security. We have been able to share with him the impact and benefit of Dstl's work for our Armed Forces, both with our science to support decision-making, deliver capability to our Armed Forces and of course save lives. It has filled me with huge pride to hear him say thank you to our incredible scientists and show his appreciation for what they do for the nation.

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[Supporting the levelling up agenda](#)

News story

We work with government departments to explore and assess policies against the levelling up agenda. This collaborative approach helps them to design better interventions.



The Government Actuary's Department (GAD) has been working with government departments to explore how policies can be assessed against the levelling up agenda.

The government's high-profile paper [White Paper](#) on the levelling up agenda sets out the principles of spreading opportunity more equally across the country.

Progress will be measured using 12 long-term 'missions' which span multiple government departments and relate to topics such as education, health, and housing.

Mapping the country

GAD works with government departments to assess how policies can best effect the levelling up principles in specific geographical areas. If the policy results in new funding being channelled to more deprived areas, that can provide evidence of support for the levelling up agenda.

An example solution is based on publicly available data from the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities. Their series of [deprivation indices](#) can be mapped to many of the long-term missions.

These indices are built up from small geographic areas – Lower-layer Super Output Areas (LSOA). There are approximately 30,000 in England. Each LSOA is ranked according to its index score, and these rankings are used to split the country into 10 equally sized categories (or deciles).

The diagram provides a visual summary of the levelling up challenge in England. The areas in red are ranked as the most deprived.

Better interventions

This collaborative approach between GAD and other government departments allows departments to assess policies against deprivation. It helps them to design better interventions that support the levelling up agenda.

Project lead Matt Kirkpatrick said: "We're working closely with clients on this key government policy. We provide support by using our actuarial skills to help them assess the effectiveness of their policies in line with the

levelling up agenda”

GAD continues to support government clients on this policy. As a result, we build up intelligence on which policy mechanisms are likely to encourage the distribution of funds to the areas which need them most.

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